

Telephone and videoconference interpreting are catching on for courtrooms, clinics and businesses, as interpreters and clients become more comfortable with the technology.

When to use remote interpreting in court

- when a rare language is needed
- when local interpreters have conflicts of interest
- when a hearing must be held before an interpreter can get there, such as for temporary restraining order petitions and hearings
- when local interpreters are uncertified. Many Wisconsin certified interpreters are willing to provide telephone interpreting. The interpreter roster is found at www.wicourts.gov/services/interpreter/docs/roster.pdf
- when interpreter travel costs are high relative to length or importance of the hearing

When not to use remote interpreting

- when there is a certified interpreter close by
- for intensive cross-examination or emotionally charged situations
- for proceedings longer than 30 minutes or proceedings involving many people
- for trials - see Wis. Stats. §807.14; §967.09
- for some people, communication is hard to establish with a remote interpreter: children, people with mental illnesses, unsophisticated users of interpreter services, deaf-blind people, and people with profound speech or language problems
- in all these cases, continue the proceeding until an interpreter can appear in person

How to use remote interpreting

- in advance: call to check qualifications, conflicts of interest, rates, dialects
- on the record: voir dire the interpreter's qualifications; check for conflicts of interest, since many immigrant communities are small and people are often related
- give the interpreter a few minutes to establish communication before the hearing
- speak clearly, slowly, one at a time; check to make sure everyone can hear

Technical requirements

- high quality conferencing equipment is essential
- allow time to set up the connection and check to sound and video quality
- set up a second phone line if attorney-client consultation will be needed
- although sign language interpreters once felt that videoconferencing did not convey enough visual information for accurate interpretation, professional organizations now recommend that interpreters actively seek training in videoconference interpreting

Reimbursement

- telephone interpreters are useful for unscheduled matters at the clerk's counter such as paying fines & submitting forms
- reimbursement for telephone and video interpreters is the same as for in-person interpreters under §885.38

Commercial interpreting services are available without appointment and usually can have an interpreter on the phone within minutes. Most services have a mix of certified and uncertified interpreters, so courts must inquire into certification & legal training. Most services offer discounts based on volume, so courts should consider sharing a contract with other county agencies such as health, police, child support, etc.

Telephone interpreters

Language Services Associates

- Headed by Holly Mikkelson, a national expert in court interpreting. Most of their court interpreters are state-certified. Available 24 hours/day. 179 foreign languages.
- Cost: No set up fee for credit card account. Rates start at \$2.10/minute any language, any time. Volume discount available.
- Contact: Frank Rowe, 800-305-9673 ext.127; www.lsaweb.com

Tele-Interpreters

- Used by Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice. Available 24 hours/day. 150 foreign languages.
- Cost: \$2.49/minute any language, any time for a credit card account
Monthly agreement: \$1.89 per minute, any language, any time, \$99.00 one-time access fee. Volume discount available.
- Contact: 800-822-5552; www.Tele-Interpreters.com

Language Line

- The pioneer in this field. Their queue system will attempt to connect to a court-certified interpreter if requested. Available 24 hours/day. 150 foreign languages.
- Cost: \$1.45/minute any language, any time. Volume discount available.
- Contact: 877-886-3885; www.languageline.com

Other commercial telephone services include Bowne Global Solutions (formerly Berlitz), Inlingua, Interpreters Inc., Quantum

Videoconference interpreters

Language Line

- Now offering sign language & foreign language interpreting via videoconference.
- Cost: \$3.50/minute sign language, \$3.00/minute foreign language. \$85/month equipment rental charge if needed.
- Contact: Ed Medrano, 831-658-7157; www.languageline.com

Life Links

- Sign language & foreign languages via videoconference. Available 24 hours/day.
- Cost: \$60-\$80/month equipment rental charge if needed.
- Contact: Eliane Uscher, 718-543-4100; www.lifelinks.net.

Other commercial video services include SignOn ASL, Interpreters Inc., Telanguage